

# Wildflower Weekend

2008 Schedule – May 10-11, 2008

## Saturday, May 10

### Spring Birds

9 to 11:30 a.m.

The high mountain springs here (elev. 2,665 ft.) served local residents and travelers crossing the Blue Ridge years ago. Now the wetland forest habitat attracts various species of birds. See who's flitting and singing around the springs and nearby trails on this gentle walk. 1 mile. Meet at Gravel Springs Gap (mile 17.6). **Limited parking.**

*Alan Williams, Ecologist/Data Manager, Shenandoah National Park*

### Marvelous Millers Head

9:30 a.m. to noon

Hike down a rocky ridge to an observation platform (elev. 3,465 ft.) and a wonderful view of the Shenandoah Valley. Some uncommon plants may be blooming here. Rocky, with steep uphill return. 1.6 mile. Total climb: about 450 ft. Meet at Millers Head trailhead: from Skyline Drive, turn into **south** entrance of Skyland (mile 42.5), pass stables and keep to left when road forks; park at top of hill.

*Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park*

### Bugs and Blooms

10 to 11:30 a.m. Children's program.

Through fun-filled activities, find out how plants and insects rely on each other in the meadow. Meet in front of Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51).

*John Manka, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park*

### South River Falls Hike

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Violets, wild geraniums and many more flowers greet hikers on this trail to a viewpoint overlooking the third-highest waterfall in the park (83 ft.). Strenuous but lovely. 3.3 miles. Total climb: about 910 ft. Meet at trailhead in South River Picnic Area (mile 62.8). Bring lunch or snack.

*Sally Hurlbert, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park*

### \*Featured Program: "Wildflowers of the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains"

1 to 2:30 p.m.

Join author Leonard M. Adkins for a multi-media experience reflecting his encounters with native wildflowers along our mountain trails. The slide program is accompanied by folk, classical and new-age music. Relax, remember, and be inspired! Mr. Adkins will be available to sign books before and after the program. Meet at Byrd Visitor Center Auditorium (milepost 51).

### Appalachian Trail Beauties

1 to 3 p.m.

Search for jack-in-the-pulpits, wood anemones, and other wildflowers representing many different families on this gentle section of the famous Georgia-to-Maine trail. 2 miles. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8).

*Betty Rosson, Volunteer Naturalist*

### **\*Big Meadows Stroll**

1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Learn about the effects of fire, deer, cattle and people on plant life in this unusual mountaintop meadow. 1/2 mile. Meet in front of Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51).

*Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park*

### **Seeds of Inspiration**

3:30 to 5 p.m.

*"When I discovered a new plant, I sat down beside it for a minute or a day, to make its acquaintance and hear what it had to tell." -- John Muir*

Cozy up to a flower or two and let them draw you into their world. Take time to closely observe nature and let your creative side blossom on this walk that includes journaling and drawing activities. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8), for a short hike on the Mill Prong Trail.

*John Manka, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park*

### **\*Southbound on the Appalachian Trail**

3:30 to 5 p.m.

Look for trillium and other woodland flowers as we hike one-way on this mostly downhill and fairly gentle portion of the famous "AT." We'll end up at Pocosin Cabin, where a van will take you back to your car. 2 miles. Total descent: about 265 ft. Meet at Lewis Mountain Picnic Area (mile 57.5).

*Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park*

### **\*Featured Program: "Traversing Ancient Mountains: 2,000 Miles on the Appalachian Trail"**

7:15 to 8:45 p.m.

Having recently completed his *fifth* thru-hike of the 2,175-mile Appalachian Trail, author Leonard M. Adkins justly refers to himself as "the Habitual Hiker." He's now rested up and ready to share with you the ups and downs of daily trekking along the famous Georgia-to-Maine pathway. His love of nature comes through in beautiful slides in this multi-media program. He will be available to sign books before and after the program. Meet at Byrd Visitor Center Auditorium (mile 51).

## **Sunday, May 11**

### **Birds and Blossoms of Pocosin**

8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Look and listen for scarlet tanagers, redstarts and many more as you identify wildflowers along the fire road to the ruins of Pocosin Mission. 2 miles. Total climb: about 400 ft. Meet at Pocosin parking area (mile 59.5, **unmarked**, east side of Skyline Drive). **Limited parking.**

*Diane Holsinger, Volunteer Naturalist*

### **\*Wilderness Waterfall**

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Discover what's blooming in the woods on your way to Rose River Falls (67 ft. high). Follow tumbling cascades that lead to this delightful waterfall in the park's designated wilderness area. 2.7 miles. Total climb: about 720 ft. Meet at Fishers Gap Overlook (mile 49.4).

*Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park*

### **Wonders of the Mill Prong**

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Singing birds, a babbling stream, ferns and a wide variety of wildflowers make this one of the most enchanting trails to explore. Changes in elevation, aspect and forest type will have you wondering what's blooming around the next bend. 2.5 miles. Total climb: about 430 ft. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8).

*Tom Dierauf, Volunteer Naturalist*

### **\*Passamaquoddy Trail Hike**

2 to 5 p.m.

Search for wildflowers along the edge of the Blue Ridge as you follow a trail beneath the cliffs of Stony Man Mountain. Great views of the Shenandoah Valley. 2 miles. Total climb: about 350 ft. Meet at Stony Man Mountain Overlook (Hughes River Gap, mile 38.6). Ride van back to your car.

*Sue Schaefer, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park*

### **Gravel Spring-Bluff Trail**

2 to 5 p.m.

Join our park botanist for a brief and fun introduction to botany basics, then explore the spring area and see what's blooming along the Bluff Trail. 2 miles. Total climb: about 200 ft. Meet at Gravel Springs Gap (mile 17.6). **Limited parking.**

*Wendy Cass, Botanist, Shenandoah National Park*

### **\*Bootens Gap to Hazeltop**

2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Look for wildflowers at your feet and around boulders scattered along the trail as we climb through the woods to Hazeltop Ridge (elev. 3,812 ft.). 2 miles. Total climb: 577 ft. Meet at Bootens Gap parking area (mile 55.1). **Limited parking.**

*Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park*

\* Indicates programs that are new this year.

## **Meet Our Volunteers**

**Leonard M. Adkins** is referred to as "The Habitual Hiker" for a reason: he has walked more than 19,000 miles around the world, exploring backcountry trails. He recently completed his fifth thru-hike of Appalachian Trail. His book, *The Appalachian Trail: A Visitor's Companion*, earned the Lowell Thomas Journalism Award from the Society of American Travel Writers Foundation. His other books include *Wildflowers of the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains*, *Wildflowers of the Appalachian Trail*, and *50 Hikes in Northern Virginia*. He is the hiking columnist for *Blue Ridge Country* magazine and writes the "Roanoke Walks" column for *The Roanoker* magazine.

**Tom Dierauf** is a retired forester with the Virginia Department of Forestry. He has enjoyed hiking, backcountry camping, fishing and discovering wildflowers in Shenandoah National Park for more than

40 years. On his hikes, Tom shares a keen knowledge of wildflowers and forest habitats, and an understated passion for conservation.

**Diane Holsinger** has led many Wildflower Weekend walks over the years. She is a member of the Virginia Native Plant Society, Rockingham Bird Club, and Mycological Association of Washington, D.C. She conducts bird surveys for the Smithsonian Institution, and is a section leader for local butterfly and bird counts. Diane's most recent birding expedition was to Costa Rica.

**Betty Rosson** has had a life-long interest in nature. After raising her family, she obtained a degree in natural resource management and worked as a seasonal biology technician for the park. She is a member of the Rockingham Bird Club, Mycological Association of Washington, D.C., and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, and is past president of the Virginia Native Plant Society.